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# SCIENCE

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## LEVEES, OUTLETS AND RESERVOIRS AS MEANS FOR PROTECTION AGAINST OVERFLOW OF THE ALLUVIAL LANDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI VALLEY BELOW CAIRO.

THE alluvial valley of the Mississippi River below Cairo contains 29,790 square miles of land subject to overflow in its natural state. It is all capable of protection and reclamation by levees except a small area at the foot of each closed drainage basin, which must be left open for the escape of surface water, and a fringe of sea marsh along its southern border. It has been in course of progressive reclamation by that method for nearly two hundred years. For the last twenty years the United States government has been assisting in the work and its progress has been rapid. The existing lines of levee are about 1,350 miles long. About 80 miles remain to be constructed to complete in length the main river system, not including some areas so small that they are not worth the cost of reclamation at the present time. In only a few places, however, are the embankments as high and strong as they should be for the greatest safety. It is not known, in fact, just how high they ought to be in order to accomplish that purpose. The work of building them began at the lower part of the river and has been carried up stream progressively. As they advanced they confined within the channel more and more of the water of great floods which had previously escaped over the bank and made its way to the sea by other paths. This process raised the flood levels within the levees higher as they were extended up